

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT MATTERS

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Visit the PM Website:
<http://infoweb/DMB>



KEY COUNTY INDICATORS

The summer 2003 issue of this newsletter addressed the concept of accountability at the Countywide level. Fairfax County has been measuring programmatic performance since 1997 using the Family of Measures – output, efficiency, service quality and outcome. These measures are all tied to specific agencies. In order to address how well we are doing at the Countywide level, County Executive Tony Griffin, challenged the senior management team (agency directors) to work together in conjunction with the staff from their agencies to develop indicators that measure Fairfax County's progress on achieving our core purpose and vision elements, which are as follows:

CORE PURPOSE

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities of Fairfax County by:

- Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities
- Building Livable Spaces
- Practicing Environmental Stewardship
- Connecting People and Places
- Creating a Culture of Engagement
- Maintaining Healthy Economies
- Exercising Corporate Stewardship

A group of agency directors was assigned to each vision element. Staff from the Department of Management and Budget's Budget Process Redesign (BPR) Team as well as the Performance Measurement Team provided support for the effort. It was a challenge to identify indicators that would convey the level of achievement on the various vision elements. There were many cases where a good indicator was identified; however, data were not readily available. If it is cost-effective, we can start collecting data for a future indicator. In some cases, the cost of data collection outweighed the benefit. Most involved in this process would agree that it was very challenging to come up with indicators that represent a good proxy for the vision element. As one good example, the Gross County Product was determined to be an appropriate benchmark for gauging progress on the Healthy Economies vision element. There are others, including employment and the commercial/industrial percentage that also provide a picture of the health of Fairfax County's economy.

Ultimately, several dozen Key County Indicators will be included in the FY 2005 Advertised Budget Plan that will be released in late February 2004. This budget will strengthen the linkage between strategic planning, resource allocation and performance measurement. Not only will we

state the County's core purpose and vision elements, but we will begin to provide data that tell the public, the Board of Supervisors and staff how well we are doing on achieving them.

FEBRUARY BROWNBAG

Are you involved in a grant program or programs? Does your grantor require you to report on performance?



Measuring, monitoring and managing the performance of grant programs is becoming increasingly more important. **Richard Eckert** of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board will lead the discussion at the next PM Brownbag on how we can more effectively measure performance in grant programs in Fairfax County.

Bring your lunch and your desire to share in this discussion on Thursday, February 19, 2004 from noon until 1 p.m. in Room 120C of the Government Center. No RSVP is necessary; just show up. Any questions about this brownbag should be directed to Barbara Emerson at 703-324-3009.

WHY THOSE 'ACTUALS' MATTER

Accountability *n.* A responsibility to be answerable or to render a full accounting for resources. In a democratic society, governments are expected to be responsible for financial resources and the performance of specific missions, goals and objectives.

When agency staff prepare their budget requests each fall, they include both the amount of financial resources requested as well as the level of service that will be provided for those services. Fairfax County's budget shows three years of historical data otherwise known as "actuals" (where available) as well as estimates for the level of performance to be achieved both in the current year and the budget year. This helps decision-makers and the public understand what it is that they are getting for the investment.

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"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."

-Abraham Lincoln

PM Events Through June 2004

The interagency Performance Measurement (PM) Team has planned the first half of the new year's schedule of training and brownbag lunches. A broadcast message will be sent out in advance of the events or you may contact Barbara Emerson at (703) 324-3009 to register for the training. No registration is necessary for the brownbag lunches.

PM 2004 CALENDAR

EVENT	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Brownbag Lunch - Measuring Performance for Grant Programs	February 19, 2004 Noon – 1 p.m.	Room 120C, Government Center (GC)
Brownbag Lunch - Public Service Recognition Week - How to Get Your Agency's Performance Recognized	May 6, 2004 Noon – 1 p.m.	Room 120C, Government Center (GC)
Basic PM Training	June 16, 2004 8:30-11:30 a.m.	CR 2-3, GC
Data Collection	June 16, 2004 1-3:30 p.m.	CR 2-3, GC
Surveying for Customer Satisfaction	June 17, 2004 8:30-11:30 a.m.	CR 2-3, GC
Managing for Results	June 17, 2004 1-3:30 p.m.	CR 2-3, GC

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Sometimes in the course of business, it is appropriate to modify or replace previously used performance measures. Several agencies did this as part of the FY 2005 budget submission in order to strengthen the link with their strategic plans. While this is a positive development, it does not negate the need to provide data for the most recent fiscal year in which those objectives and indicators were still applicable. What this means is – even if you changed your measures in the fall of 2003 for the FY 2005 budget, you are still accountable for providing FY 2003 actuals (for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2003). Change can be a good thing – but not at the expense of accountability.

When the FY 2005 budget is adopted (including the modified measures), agencies are then responsible for providing information on how well they did in FY 2004 and FY 2005 on those new measures. These data are entered into the County's

Performance Measurement Database each fall concurrent with the budget submission. Reports are then provided to County management and are published in the annual budget document, closing the loop on accountability.

NEAR AND FAR

What do a roomful of federal executives, staff in Montgomery County, some Indonesian local governments and a Spanish Ph.D. student have in common? In recent months, they all expressed interest in learning more about Fairfax County's performance measurement program. During the fall, a student from the University of Zaragoza in Spain who is working on her Ph.D. requested to visit Fairfax County during a semester at the School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University. She had heard of Fairfax County's program and wanted first-hand information to use for her doctoral dissertation.

Later in the fall, the County was contacted by the Deputy Director for Training and

Publications for a program called Building Institutions for Good Governance (BIGG) in Indonesia, a program that is coordinated by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). She requested permission to translate the Fairfax County's PM Manual into the Indonesian language for printing and distribution to local governments in Indonesia.

Closer to home, the Council for Excellence, a nonpartisan, nonprofit, national organization whose mission is to strengthen federal leadership and management requested a presentation to their Fellows on the County's performance measurement system in early December. Several times during their program year, these Fellows hear from leaders of public and private sector organizations to learn how those organizations streamlined structures, encouraged innovation, and focused on customers and results. Throughout their program year and beyond,

Fellows apply what they learn to seek comparable results in their own organizations.

Finally, to close out the year, the coordinator of the Montgomery County, Maryland performance measurement program asked Fairfax County's PM Coordinator to address approximately 50 staff who have responsibility for reporting and managing performance in that jurisdiction. As we do frequently, they were looking to learn from others. These presentations benefit Fairfax County as well because you always learn something when talking with peers, whether they are across the river or the world.

"He is able who thinks he is able."



- Buddha